

William Berkeley Lewis to Andrew Jackson, May 22, 1844, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>MAJOR WILLIAM B. LEWIS TO JACKSON.

Washington, May 22, 1844.

My dear Genl, Yours of the 11th Inst was received yesterday, and found me quite ill with a violent cold and sore throat. I am, I hope, some better, tho' I am still quite indisposed, having on me, at this time, a smart fever.

I am, as well as the most of your friends here, in and out of Congress, both South and North of Mason and Dixon's line, exceedingly gratified at the firm and unflinching tone of your letters to me and others. I occasionally show them, my dear Genl, to such as know how to appreciate the 0319 295 sound and forcible views which they uniformly take, but I never permit extracts to be taken from them, as they might, in that event, find their way into the newspapers, which I have supposed you would not desire, as many of them are marked private. Your last letter, however, I have trusted out of my hand, having enclosed it confidentially , to Messrs. Stevenson and Ritchie who I was sure would be very much gratified at its perusal; but under a positive injunction that it was not to be published. He, Mr. Ritchie, was exceedingly anxious to hear from you, after you should have received Mr. Van Burens letter, and as I thought it might do good for him to see it, I took the liberty of enclosing it to him, with a request that he would send it back to me by return mail.

The delegates of the Baltimore convention are rapidly collecting in this city, for the purpose doubtless of consulting with their democratic friends. But Major Donelson, whom I am daily expecting, has not yet arrived. They have a very important and difficult part to act in this

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great National drama. If the delegates will have the patriotism to lay aside every selfish and ambitious feeling and look alone to the good of the country, success may and will yet crown their efforts. Will they do it? I fear not. I have never believed that any man of the Party could be elected, without a united, zealous, and fearless effort of the whole Party. I never, General, as you know, had any confidence in Mr. Van Burens availability, even before he came out against annexation; but now, since this unfortunate letter has been published, the chances against him have greatly increased. Yet, notwithstanding this, I think the probabilities are in favor of his getting the nomination. If so, a third democratic candidate, in favor of immediate annexation, will undoubtedly be taken up by the Slave holding States, which will so divide the democratic votes, as to ensure Mr. Clays election. Such, at least, is the opinion of almost every person here with whom I have conversed. There is no use, however, in speculating upon the subject, as a few days more will give us the result of the deliberations of the Convention. Success is within the reach of the Democratic party, if they choose to grasp it, but I fear they neither have the wisdom nor the patriotism to do it!

I saw Mr. Kendall, a short time since, and had a conversation with him, upon the subject of annexation. He said he was in favor of the measure, but gave no intimations as to whether he was in favor of immediate annexation, as a test question at the approaching presidential election. He had no doubt but that Kentucky was decidedly in favor of it, and expressed it as his belief, that if Cass and Johnson were candidates they could carry the State, easily, against Mr. Clay. Indeed, he said, if they were to be nominated, he had no doubt but they would be triumphantly elected! This, too, has always been Mr Blairs opinion, frequently expressed to me, and, the last time but a few days ago. And yet is it not strange, passing strange, that there should be such an effort made to take up another candidate, whose election all admit, to say the least, would be exceedingly doubtful! Against Genl. Cass, Mr. Kendall says, there is no prejudices, and all, at the same time,

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admit his high qualifications for the station, in peace and war , and his unblemished moral character!